

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-50 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-50 have been rejected. By the above amendment, new claim 51 has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-51 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Within the previous Office Action mailed on November 2, 2004 (hereinafter "Office Action"), claims 1-50 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,067,552 issued to Tonny Yu (hereafter "Yu"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

The directory tree structure of the present invention is an overlay to a searchable data base. One type of pointer, a data pointer, links positions within the directory tree structure to individual data items. Each node within the directory tree structure includes one or more data pointers. Since each node is related to a specific category, all data items linked to the node are also related to the specific category. Each node includes a set of parameter fields, and each individual data item linked to the node has a set value for one or more of the parameter fields. In this manner, each individual data item is characterized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure to a node linked to the individual data item, and by its set parameter field values. Accordingly, the data pointer that links the node to the individual data item is also characterized by the navigation path to the node and the set parameter field values of the individual data item.

Nodes are also preferably cross-linked to other nodes with related topics. Objects, such as individual data items or nodes, are linked to multiple categories inside the directory tree structure. Cross-links between two nodes, or node pointers, enable users to navigate laterally around the directory tree structure. Cross-links are different than links, or branches, between a parent node and a child node. Branches are links within the same navigation path. Cross-links are links between two nodes located in different navigation paths.

The present claims specifically differentiate "nodes," "branches," "data pointers," "data item," and "node pointers." Nodes and branches define a directory tree structure, where the

directory tree structure represents an organizational construct corresponding to the database. Each node represents a designated category, and branches comprise links between the nodes. Data items are well known in the art as representing physical items of data stored within the database. Each data pointer provides a link between a node and a data item. In this manner, each data pointer provides a link between a point within the database organizational construct (a node within the directory tree structure) and a physical item of data within the database (data item). Each node pointer provides a link between two nodes, where each of the two nodes is located in a different navigation path through the directory tree structure. In this manner, a cross-link is formed which provides a link between two different navigation paths within the database organizational construct.

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. Figure 4 illustrates a two-level tree structure including a category level 78 and a subcategory level 80. A level 82 is also illustrated which represents selection of primary and secondary selection parameters. However, this is nothing more than a selection option, such as menu 140 in Figure 10, which is associated with the specific subcategory selected in level 80. Users can navigate between a category and a subcategory, and from the subcategory back to the category. This is simplistically referred to as vertical movement up and down the tree structure. Witek teaches a directory path from a category to a subcategory of the category. This is most analogous to a branch within the present invention. Witek does not teach a means for laterally, or horizontally, moving within the tree structure.

The tree structure of Witek is a means for representing a data base organizational construct. Within the Office Action, it is acknowledged that Witek does not teach node pointers, where node pointers form cross-links between two nodes, located in two different navigation paths, of a data base organizational construct.

Yu teaches an apparatus for browsing a hypertext database. Yu teaches that a hypertext database is the utilization of a hypertext-type nodal network in conjunction with a multimedia database. The hypertext database includes hypertext nodes, where each node corresponds to a document (Yu, col. 4, lines 16-17). In other words, a series of documents are linked using hypertext links, such as “browsing,” which is well known in the art. Specifically, Yu teaches a database 106 comprising a plurality of documents 108a-108c that are interconnected by reference links 109a, 109b (Yu, Figure 1b, and col. 7, lines 35-40). Clearly, each of the links 109a, 109b are links between two data items (documents 108a-108c).

As defined in the present specification and again in the present claims, “nodes” and “data items” are separate and distinct elements. A “node” is a construct used to define a database structure, such as the claimed directory tree structure, where each node construct represents a designated category. A “data item” is a physical item of data stored within the database. “Node pointers”, as claimed, form cross-links between two nodes in two different navigation paths. Yu teaches links between two documents, each document located in a different navigation path. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes, each node located in a different navigation path. Since neither Witek, nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths.

Within the Advisory Action mailed on January 26, 2005 (hereinafter “Advisory Action”), it is stated that “Yu clearly teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes” and “[t]herefore, Witek and Yu combination teach claimed limitation.” To support this assertion, Figure 1c of Yu is cited. In particular, within the Advisory Action is stated that “[a]s seen in Figure 1c, pointer 109c is a cross-link between two documents (108a and 108b)” (emphasis added). Yes, the Applicant agrees that Yu teaches a cross-link between two documents. However, as described in detail above, the claimed limitations differentiate between a data item (document) and a node. As such, the claimed limitations are directed to a cross-link between two nodes, referred to as a node pointer. As further claimed, each node pointer links two nodes, each node located in a different navigation path from the other. Within the Advisory Action, it is explicitly stated that Yu teaches “a cross-link between two documents.” The Applicant is unclear as to the subsequent conclusion reached within the Advisory Action “Yu clearly teaches node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes.” What two nodes? The proceeding sentence within the Advisory Action has just cited pointer 109c of Yu as a cross-link between the two “documents” 108a and 108b, not as a cross-link between two nodes. Therefore, the conclusion

reached within the Advisory Action (last two sentences of the Continuation Sheet) is in direct conflict with the proceeding acknowledgment (third to last sentence of the Continuation Sheet) within the same Advisory Action. As such, as explicitly taught in Yu, and as acknowledged within the Advisory Action, Yu teaches a cross-link between *two documents* located in different navigation paths. Yu does not teach a cross-link between *two nodes* located in two different navigation paths.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method of organizing data within a searchable database. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of generating a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, generating one or more data pointers, wherein each data pointer corresponds to a specific node and the data pointer links the specific node to an item of data within the searchable database, wherein each data pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual data item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the data pointer is included, further wherein all items of data linked to the specific node by the corresponding pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node, and generating one or more node pointers, wherein a first node pointer corresponds to a first node located in a first navigation path through the directory tree structure, and the first node pointer is directed to a second node located in a second navigation path different than the first navigation path, thereby forming a cross-link between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Witek does not teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As discussed above, Yu teaches links between two data items. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. Since neither Witek nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

Claims 2-12 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claims 2-12 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 13 is directed to an organization system for organizing data within a searchable database. The organization system of claim 13 comprises means for generating a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, means for generating one or more data pointers coupled to the means for generating a directory tree structure, wherein each data pointer corresponds to a specific node and the data pointer links the specific node to an item of data within the searchable database, wherein each data pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual data item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the data pointer is included, further wherein all items of data linked to the specific node by the corresponding data pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node, and means for generating one or more node pointers, wherein a first node pointer corresponds to a first node located in a first navigation path through the directory tree structure, and the first node pointer is directed to a second node located in a second navigation path different than the first navigation path, thereby forming a cross-link between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Witek does not teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As discussed above, Yu teaches links between two data items. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. Since neither Witek nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 13 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

Claims 14-24 depend on the independent claim 13. As described above, the independent claim 13 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claims 14-24 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 25 is directed to an organization system for organizing data within a searchable database. The organization system of claim 25 comprises an organization server configured to generate a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, and to generate one or more data pointers, wherein each data pointer corresponds to a specific node and the data pointer links the specific node to an item of data within the searchable

database, wherein each data pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual data item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the data pointer is included, further wherein all items of data linked to the specific node by the corresponding data pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node and to generate one or more node pointers, wherein a first node pointer corresponds to a first node located in a first navigation path through the directory tree structure, and the first node pointer is directed to a second node located in a second navigation path different than the first navigation path, thereby forming a cross-link between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Witek does not teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As discussed above, Yu teaches links between two data items. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. Since neither Witek nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 25 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

Claims 26-36 depend on the independent claim 25. As described above, the independent claim 25 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claims 26-36 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 37 is directed to a network of devices for organizing data within a searchable database. The network of devices of claim 37 comprises one or more computer systems configured to communicate with other systems, and an organization server configured to couple to the one or more computer systems to generate a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, and to generate one or more data pointers, wherein each data pointer corresponds to a specific node and the data pointer links the specific node to an item of data within the searchable database, wherein each data pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual data item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the data pointer is included, further wherein all items of data linked to the specific node by the corresponding data pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node and to

generate one or more node pointers, wherein a first node pointer corresponds to a first node located in a first navigation path through the directory tree structure, and the first node pointer is directed to a second node located in a second navigation path different than the first navigation path, thereby forming a cross-link between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Witek does not teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As discussed above, Yu teaches links between two data items. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. Since neither Witek nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

Claims 38-46 depend on the independent claim 37. As described above, the independent claim 37 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claims 38-46 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Within the Office Action, it is stated that Witek teaches that each node within the directory tree structure includes a corresponding html address, as claimed in the present independent claims 47 and 49. To support this assertion, column 23, lines 11-22 of Witek is cited. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this interpretation of the cited passage. Column 23, lines 11-22 of Witek describes a user accessing a newspaper website. The user is to navigate the newspaper web site to locate the desired feature, that is the classified ad system. The Applicant agrees that navigating a web site that includes html pages and hyperlinks between the html pages is well known in the art. However, at column 23, lines 11-22, Witek teaches how to navigate the newspaper web site to access the classified ad system. This is not a description as to the classified ad system itself, nor a description of the category structure of the classified ad system previously described. In contrast, the present application claims the configuration of a system that organizes data into a directory tree structure, where nodes within the directory tree structure represent html addresses and the branches between nodes represent links from an html address of one node to an html address of another node. Most analogous to a node of the present invention is a category/subcategory designation of Witek. However, there is no hint, teaching, or suggestion within Witek that indicates a category/subcategory designation corresponds to an html address.

Claim 47 is directed to a method of organizing data within a searchable database. The method of claim 47 comprises generating a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category and an html address for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, and generating one or more pointers, wherein each pointer corresponds to a specific node and the pointer links the specific node to an item of web-based multimedia within the searchable database, wherein each pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual web-based multimedia item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the pointer is included, further wherein all items of web-based multimedia linked to the specific node by the corresponding pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node. As discussed above, Witek does not teach a node corresponding to an html address. Within the Office Action, Yu is not cited for teaching a node corresponding to an html address. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 47 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

Claim 48 depends on the independent claim 47. As described above, the independent claim 47 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claim 48 is also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 49 is directed to a method of generating a directory tree structure for organizing data within a searchable database and for accessing the searchable database over the internet. The method of claim 49 comprises the steps of generating one or more nodes wherein each node includes an html address and a designated category, generating links between the nodes wherein each node is linked to at least one other node, further wherein each link is a hypertext link between a first html address of a first node and a second html address of a second node, generating one or more pointers, wherein each pointer corresponds to a specific node and the pointer links the specific node to an item of web-based multimedia within the searchable database, wherein each pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual web-based multimedia item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the pointer is included, further wherein all items of web-based multimedia linked to the specific node by the corresponding pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node, and establishing a connection over the internet to the directory tree structure for accessing the searchable database.

As discussed above, Witek does not teach a node corresponding to an html address. Within the Office Action, Yu is not cited for teaching a node corresponding to an html address. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 49 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

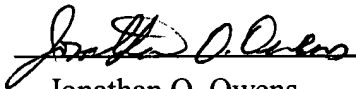
Claim 50 depends on the independent claim 49. As described above, the independent claim 49 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination. Accordingly, claim 50 is also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

New independent claim 51 is directed to a method of organizing data within a searchable database. The method includes generating a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a designated category for each node and branches comprising links between the nodes, generating one or more data pointers, wherein each data pointer corresponds to a specific node and the data pointer links the specific node to an item of data within the searchable database, wherein each data pointer is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, wherein each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with an individual data item thereby forming a set parameter, and the parameters are specific to the node in which the data pointer is included, further wherein all items of data linked to the specific node by the corresponding pointers of the specific node are related to the designated category of the specific node, and generating one or more node pointers, wherein a node pointer is different than a data pointer, further wherein each node pointer defines a cross-link between a first node located in a first navigation path and a second node located in a second navigation path. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Witek does not teach node pointers that form cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. As discussed above, Yu teaches links between two data items. Yu does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. Since neither Witek nor Yu teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths, the combination of Witek in view of Yu also does not teach cross-links between two nodes located in two different navigation paths. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 51 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Yu, and their combination.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-51 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
HAVERSTOCK & OWENS LLP

Date: February 28, 2005

By: 
Jonathan O. Owens
Reg. No. 37,902

Attorneys for Applicant